

Open Day Q&A

Hello and welcome to Alderley Kindergarten. We are a community based Kindergarten located on the Northside of Brisbane that has been providing early childhood education for over 70 years and are affiliated with Lady Gowrie QLD. We are a double unit kindergarten and offer an approved Kindergarten program to 94 children each year. Being a community based, we are a kindergarten that is run by the community, for the community. As a result, we are focused on ensuring that we are responsive to the needs of our families, both current and prospective. As a not-for-profit organisation, all money goes directly back into the Kindergarten program to enhance your child's kindergarten experience.

- **What is your 2022 program model?**

Our kindergarten offers four groups across the week and two program models.

Our three day program operates from 8.30am to 2.30pm. Our two day program operates from 8.00am to 3.30pm. In 2022 our program model is as follows:

Beginning of week groups:

Monday-Wednesday: 8.30am-2.30pm

End of week groups:

Thursday-Friday: 8.00am-3.30pm

- **Do you provide Outside Hours Care?**

Our Kindergarten offers Outside Hours Care for 46 weeks of the year. During term times we offer before care (7.30am-8.30am) and after hours care (2.30pm-5.30pm). During the school holidays we offer vacation care (8.30am-5.30pm) for the Easter, June/July and September holiday breaks. Our Outside Hours Care program ensures your child can experience our kindergarten program but gives families the flexibility of their child receiving care and education from 7.30am to 5.30pm.

- **Can my child access Outside Hours Care casually?**

Your child is able to access our Outside Hours Care program on a casual basis. A \$5 booking fee applies per casual booking. We offer permanent bookings on a term by term basis and these families benefit from a subsidised rate.

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- What makes a community kindergarten different?

A strength of a community kindergarten is that, similar to schools, we have the same classes with the same teacher and educator across the year. That means that the same children attend for the same program. Your child will know who will be there every day they come to Kindergarten and the children arrive and leave together. This provides continuity to a child and supports them in feeling safe and secure. When a child feels safe and secure they are more likely to take safe risks within the environment and with their learning.

Another strength is that we just have the kindergarten age group, so the year prior to going to school. Our teachers and educators are experts on this age group and can tailor our educational program to specifically support kindergarten age children. We have a deep awareness of where the children are now, so their sense of being, as well as knowing where they are going and transitioning to, so who they are becoming. We are connected with local schools and prep teachers and engage in regular dialogue to ensure that children are able to leave our kindergarten and thrive within a prep environment.

- Could you please give an example of a daily timetable?

Our sessional program follows the same daily routine. This gives children a sense of consistency and continuity as they can predict what is going to happen next. The day has a balance between teacher led experiences and emergent ideas from the children, all supported by our philosophy of learning through play. No matter what group your child is in, the daily routine is the same.

Children arrive at the same time and complete activities on our large mats while we wait for the remainder of the class to arrive. As the year progresses there might be activities for children to complete on the verandahs such as 'signing in', which supports their early literacy skills. We play a 'gathering song' which symbolises to the children that we are going to begin our day. We then have our first group time together where we welcome everyone and begin discussing our plans for the day.

As we are a double unit kindergarten, we alternate between the outdoor learning space. After our morning meeting one group will go outside while the other group will stay inside. This is alternated on a weekly basis. During our indoor and outdoor sessions our teaching staff support and extend on the children's learning, observe the children in their play, engage in follow up experiences that have come from past days at Kindy. Following this first session we have our morning tea together outside under the shade of our umbrellas. We then gather for a story before commencing the second session where the group that was inside goes outside and vice versa. Following this we have a music session together before our lunch. After lunch is our rest and relaxation time. Then, depending on your group, the short day program get ready to go home and our long day program has another session either inside or outside depending on our intentional teaching and the children's emergent ideas.



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- Do the kindy kids still have sleep/quiet time?

We feel it's important that children recognise and respond to their bodies need for rest. In such a busy world being able to slow down and rest is an important skill to develop. Following our lunch time we do encourage the children to have some quiet time. We will read the children a book which gives the children who need to sleep some time to do so. Children who do not sleep can then complete some quiet activities such as reading books, busy bags etc. Our quiet time is usually no longer than half an hour.

- How much time is spent on the learning curriculum per day as opposed to play?

Our kindergarten program is based on the Queensland Kindergarten Guidelines which is a curriculum specific to the kindergarten age group. Learning through play is the basis of this curriculum and our philosophy, it is also the most developmentally appropriate way to engage children in their learning and is supported by research. Some people might look at what children are doing and go 'they're just playing' but play is real learning and it's how young children learn. This doesn't mean though that children are left to their own devices all day every day. This is why the role of the teacher/educator is so important within our kindergarten program. Our teaching staff create an environment that supports and engages children based off the learning outcomes of our curriculum. We also support and scaffold children in their play and extend their learning based on their interests. As previously mentioned, our daily routine provides a balance of teacher led experiences (for example, our group times) and emergent learning from the children. So for example, the children might be interested in tea parties. We will intentionally set up these spaces within our kindergarten environment and support the children as they socially engage in their play. From here, we might brainstorm what we know about tea parties, which encourages their language skills and sense of belonging and plan to create a café. We will encourage children to make signs so that others know that it is a café, make menus which encourages their writing skills, discuss paying for the items which brings in numeracy... the possibilities to this interest are really only limited by our imagination. What this really highlights is that 'learning' doesn't happen in isolation within our kindergarten program. It's influenced by the world around us and our interactions with people within the environment. It also provides real-world applications to the children's learning. Literacy and numeracy are not an 'add on' with a number or letter of the day. Instead they are embedded and relevant to the children's current interests and development.

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- Could you please tell me the pros and cons of the two day vs three day kindy program? Especially for a child that has never attended daycare. Which program would best prepare him for school?

Both of our program offer benefits to families for a variety of reasons and all programs will support your child's preparation for school. Each group has the same children and same teacher and educator that attend which provides continuity to your child, which is particularly important if they have never been in care before. The two day program can suit families who require a longer sessional day but don't need to access before or after care. The three day program can be suitable for families who may work on those days and either have the flexibility to pick up their child at 2.30pm or will access our outside hours care program for these days. I would suggest looking at what days best suit you and your lifestyle and then reflecting on whether you need before or after care. If you don't need extended hours then the three days might be best; but if you need that little bit of extra time then the two days could be more appropriate.

- How does the Alderley Kindy program support children's development and prepare them for school?

Our teachers and educators are experts of the kindergarten age group and have created a kindergarten program that acknowledges where children in this age group are, so their sense of being, as well as an awareness of where they are transitioning to, so their sense of becoming. We are in network groups with local schools and prep teachers where we can discuss and collaborate on how to best support the transition between kindy and prep. Our learning program provides a holistic education to develop the whole child. It is through play based learning that we embed early literacy and numeracy skills to ensure that they are relevant to the child's current interests and development. Of most importance to us within this kindergarten year is supporting the children's social and emotional skills. This is so important as a child transitions into formal schooling. If you can imagine a child knowing all of their sounds, letters and numbers but not yet able to regulate their body to sustain attention, or not able to regulate their emotions if things aren't going how they planned; their 'learning' brain isn't able to turn on because their 'survival' brain is being activated. A lot of our intentional teaching is focused on supporting children with the tools and tricks they can use to navigate their world as competent and capable people.

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- Are there many car parks available?

There is plenty of short term parking available on Railway Street. Many of our families will choose to park in the Coles carpark (short term) and walk their child down to Kindy. Our staggered start and finish times also means that there is less congestion.

- How many qualified teachers are employed?

In aligning with the National Quality Standard, all of our Kindergarten classes have a Bachelor qualified teacher and a diploma or certificate qualified educator. All of our teachers have undertaken an early childhood specific bachelor degree to ensure that they are experts of the early childhood field and kindergarten age group.

What Indigenous traditions/culture is taught / part of the learning?

In aligning to the Early Years Learning Framework and Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guidelines, we embed indigenous perspectives within our kindergarten curriculum. We recognise the importance of highlighting significant dates and events throughout the year and do so in age-appropriate ways. Each year we have incursions with an indigenous focus, which are led by indigenous community members.